

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The House of Representatives and the Senate voted to override President Bush's veto of the recently passed Farm Bill. The two chambers of Congress voted overwhelmingly to approve the bill that provides funding for a wide range of agriculture, nutrition and conservation programs. That means sweeping reforms that benefit California farmers are now law.

"Congress has sent a message to the president that he cannot dictate American priorities," said Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel). "The president has spent the last seven years bullying Congress, but no more. This Farm Bill is all about American priorities, from preserving open space to investing in the health of our children. In crossing the aisle to support the Democratic Farm Bill, Republicans set aside partisan politics and told the president that the status quo is no longer acceptable."

The House on Wednesday voted 316-108 to override the president's veto, while the Senate's override vote passed today 82-13. A clerical error left Title III out of the final bill; that title revolves around various trade provisions and will be resolved after the Memorial Day recess.

"For the first time we are looking at a farm bill that helps all farmers from coast to coast, not just the grain belt states," Rep. Farr said following last week's House vote to approve the bill's conference report. "California--in fact, the whole country--will benefit from the changes made in this farm bill on both the producer and consumer side. Growers will see vital investment in research, marketing and export assistance for specialty crops to keep producing healthy nutritious food while consumers will reap the benefits of expanded feeding programs including healthy fruit and vegetable snacks to school children."

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Benefits for fruit and vegetable farmers:

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Funds the **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program** for 10 years, providing \$466 million to expand research grants. The block grants are provided to states to support projects in research, marketing, education, pest and disease management, production and food safety.

Helps fruit and vegetable producers address food safety, pest and disease management issues with \$377 million for **pest and disease detection and control**.

Increases funding by \$1 billion for the **USDA Snack Program**, which helps schools provide healthy snacks to students during after-school activities and expands the program to all 50 states.

Dedicates \$78 million for **organic research priorities**. The bill also sets aside \$22 million for USDA's cost-share program and \$5 million for organic marketing data collection and publication.

Provides \$33 million to expand opportunities for direct **producer-to-consumer marketing**.

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